

IN

THE UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION

FOR

RIBBON AND WRAPPING PAPER STORAGE AND DISPENSING DEVICE

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FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to the storage and dispensing of flat rolled goods such as ribbons and wrapping paper, most notably used for wrapping packages and gifts.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Due to the various and odd sizes of ribbons and wrapping paper, and the various sizes of hubs upon which they are wound when sold, it is difficult to find a method of storing these items in a compact and efficient manner and at the same time allowing such items to be fully and immediately visible and accessible so that the user can easily see what supplies are available, choose the appropriate item, and dispense it without disturbing the other items in the storage system.

It would be desirable to be able to store both ribbons and wrapping paper, on the hubs upon which they are sold, in a single storage device such that all contents are compactly and efficiently stored while at the same time allowing the contents to be immediately visible and accessible. It would further be desirable to allow the items to be dispensed easily without disturbing the other items of the storage system. It would be further desirable to easily move, use, and store the device in a number of different locations and in a number of different ways so as to easily adapt to the user's domicile and work area.

The present invention discloses such a device.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention consists of a device that stores substantially rolled sheet materials such as ribbon and wrapping paper, on the hubs upon which they are sold, in a single storage device such that the items are compactly and efficiently stored while, at the same time, the contents are immediately visible and accessible. The present device allows the contents to be dispensed easily without disturbing other items stored in the storage system. The device can be easily moved so that it may be used in a number of different locations and configurations, as well as stored in a number of different ways so as to easily adapt to the user's work and storage area.

While the following specifically refers to ribbons and wrapping paper, the invention could also be used equally well for the storage and dispensing of other flat rolled goods such as cloth material, decorative fabric and material, etc., and therefore the references to ribbons and wrapping paper are illustrative of certain uses and should not be interpreted as limiting the scope of the invention.

While these and other advantages and objects of the present invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art from the following detailed description and accompanying drawings, showing the contemplated novel construction, combinations and elements as herein described, it is understood that changes in the precise embodiments of the herein disclosed invention are meant to be included within the scope of the invention, except insofar as they may be precluded by prior art.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The accompanying drawings illustrate preferred embodiments of the present invention according to the best mode presently devised for making and using the invention, and in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective illustration of the present invention shown in an open position forming a self-supporting “A” shaped structure.

Figure 2 is a perspective illustration of the present invention shown in a closed position, as it would be hanging from a door, or other substantially vertical surface, and utilizing a plurality of dual-use brackets; the door itself is only partially shown and partially cut-away for clarity purposes.

Figure 3 is a perspective illustration of a portion of the front and rear frames of the present invention where they are joined by a hinge and are shown in the open or “A” frame position.

Figure 4 is a perspective illustration of a portion of the front and rear frames of the present invention where they are joined by a hinge and are shown in the closed position.

Figure 5 are plan illustrations of the dual-use brackets used to support the present invention in a hanging configuration showing an expansion feature for use on doors of various thicknesses, and also showing the dual-use brackets with the expansion feature

removed so that the brackets can be fastened to a wall or other substantially vertical surface.

Figure 6 is a perspective illustration of the dual-use brackets showing a snap-off feature, namely, score lines to allow a portion of the bracket to be removed so that it may be used on substantially flat, vertical surfaces. One bracket is shown in its entirety and the other bracket is shown with the expansion section for mounting over the top of a door snapped off and removed.

Figure 7 is a perspective illustration of the present invention shown in the closed configuration as it might be for storage.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Fig. 1 illustrates the present invention which consists of a front frame 13 and a rear frame 14, each of which are connected to each other as described below. The present device further includes a number of horizontal rods 16 upon which ribbons 17 and wrapping paper 18 or the like are stored, on the same hubs 19 or tubes on which they are sold and dispensed.

Each of the front and rear frames 13, 14 consists of two upright members 11 joined by two horizontal members 12. The length of the horizontal members 12 are such that they cause the upright members 11 of both the front frame 13 and rear frame 14 to be spaced

31 inches or so apart so as to accept ribbons 17 and wrapping paper rolls 18 in standard sizes of up to 30". The upright members 11 of the front frame 13 have a plurality of partially drilled holes 41 or partially milled slots 31 on the inside of one side 11 to accept the horizontal rods 16, and a plurality of partially milled slots 31 on the other side 11 facing toward the center of the frame 13, so as to accept the horizontal rods 16. Since the holes 41 and slots 31 do not extend through the upright members 11, the rods 16 are captured between the two upright members 11 of the front frame 13, but the slots 31 allow the rods 16 to be easily removed for loading and unloading of ribbon rolls 17 and wrapping paper 18. The slots 31 are formed at a substantially 45° angle with a closed part 35 of the slot 31 sloping toward the lower horizontal member 12, and an open part 34 of the slot 31 facing up and to the front of the frame 13. This allows gravity to hold the rods 16 in place while being stored and while material is being dispensed. The two frames 13,14 are fastened together with a plurality of hinges 32 at or near the top horizontal member 12 such that when the device is in a closed position the frames 13,14 will be substantially parallel to each other (Fig. 2,7). Alternatively, when the device is in an open position the frames 13,14 will form a self-supporting "A" shaped structure (Fig. 1). The actual angle of the "A" shaped structure is determined by the angle 33 of the top of the upright members 11 of the rear frame 14 or some other similar stop mechanism, so as to limit the open angle of the hinged vertical members 11 of the front and rear frames 13,14.

While the front frame 13 holds the ribbons 17 and wrapping paper 18, the rear frame 14 serves two additional functions. First, the rear frame 14 hold the front frame 13 away

from a mounting surface 21,50,51,52 thereby providing clearance for the ribbon 17 and wrapping paper rolls 18. Second, the rear frame 14 provides support when used in the free-standing mode (Fig. 1).

The device is designed to be stored either hanging (Fig. 2) or standing (Fig. 7) To store the device in the hanging configuration, dual-use brackets 20 are used. In one embodiment of the invention, the brackets 20 are supported over the top of a door 21 and the device is suspended from the brackets 20 by the top horizontal member 12 of the rear frame 14. The brackets 20 are designed such that they can be easily slipped over a door 50 as narrow as 1" thick and, with a little force to open an expansion section 61, over a door 51 as wide as wide as 1 3/4" thick. To hang the device from a wall 52 or other substantially vertical surface, the dual-use brackets 20 are designed with score lines 60 such that the user can snap off the top expansion part 61 of the bracket 20 normally used to go over the top of the door 21,50,51 at the score lines 60 and then the lower part 63 of the bracket 20 can be attached to the wall 52 or other vertical surface with fastening means such as screws or the like. To store the device standing, the device is left in the closed position and can be stored behind a couch or other piece of furniture or in any space which will accommodate it (Fig. 7).

To load and unload ribbon rolls 17 and wrapping paper rolls 18, the horizontal rods 16 are removed first from the upright member 11 of the front frame 13 with the slots 31 and then from the vertical member 11 of the front frame 13 with the holes 41. Ribbon rolls 17 and wrapping paper rolls 18 are then threaded onto the rods 16, and the rods 16 are then

replaced in the reverse manner. The holes 41 and corresponding slots 31 for the horizontal rods 16 are preferably spaced approximately 2" apart vertically. The horizontal rods 16 can be placed in each set of holes 41 and slots 31 or, alternatively, one or more slots 31 and holes 41 can be left empty to allow for larger adjacent rolls of ribbon 17 or wrapping paper 18. In this manner, the most efficient use of storage space is achieved.

The device is designed to be used either hanging or standing. To access and dispense ribbon 17 or wrapping paper 18, the desired material is simply unrolled from its hub 19 while still on the device and cut to the desired length. A hook 15 is provided and may be attached to either upright member of the front frame 13 for storage of scissors and other cutting devices. The remaining material remains on the device. Dispensing of material can be done while the device is hanging (Fig. 2) from its mounting brackets 20 or while in the free-standing configuration (Fig. 1).